



# 2007 FALL REPORT

To the citizens of the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative District

## STATE REPRESENTATIVE MAUREEN WALSH



### Dear Friends and Neighbors:

I hope you all had a wonderful summer. Even though session has been out for several months, I am still working to advance solutions to the issues that are important to you. This summer (in addition to enduring the remodeling of my 1970s era home!), I stayed busy meeting with constituents on an array of issues. I continue to advocate strongly on behalf of foster parents and our childcare providers. In June I toured the Palouse region with the Washington Association of Wheat Growers and then I joined the Walla Walla Conservation District to tour many of their projects in the area. In September, I was honored to address folks at the well-attended Reasonable Efforts Symposium held in Richland.

The Governor has visited our district several times and is quite impressed with the area, our great wines, and the efforts we have put forth in promoting them. Most recently she and the Speaker of the House joined the community for the dedication of two new buildings at the Walla Walla Community College; the new Health and Performing Arts Building, and the William A. Grant Water and Environmental Center, named for my esteemed seat mate.

In October, I traveled to the United Kingdom and Finland with several other state legislators, business leaders and early learning professionals to study successful practices in early learning and childcare in those countries. I am grateful that state taxpayer dollars were not used on this trip, as it was entirely funded by the Economic Opportunity Institute with a grant from the Gates Foundation. I would like to thank the Gates Foundation for their interest in and contribution toward promoting this vital issue.

The next session, which begins January 14, will be a short 60-day session as opposed to the 105-day session that we had this year to set the state's budget.

As always, please get involved in your government by calling or e-mailing me and my staff. We are here to help and to represent your needs and inquiries. Thank you for allowing me to represent you.

Sincerely,

Rep. Maureen Walsh



*From left: Rep. Skip Priest, Sen. Claudia Kauffman, Rep. Eric Pettigrew, myself and Rep. Ruth Kagi at the entrance to the House of Parliament in London.*

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### Toll-Free Legislative Hotline:

1-800-562-6000

### TTY (Hearing-impaired):

1-800-635-9993

### Committees:

Appropriations  
Early Learning and Children's Services  
Human Services  
Select Committee on Puget Sound

### Task forces and councils:

Children's Trust of Washington  
Joint Task Force on Administration  
and Delivery of Services to Children  
and Families  
Caring for Washington Individuals  
with Autism Task Force

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## PARENT INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER (PIRC) OPEN IN WALLA WALLA!

Teachers know that success in the classroom begins before children start school; parents are their children's first teachers. Every parent wants their child to have a better life than they do. The need for early education programs in our rural district is great – parents simply do not have access (financial or geographical) to the same resources as others in large metropolitan areas.



That's why I was proud to attend the dedication of the first Parent Information Resource Center in Walla Walla on Sept. 6. The PIRC will give parents the tools and support they need to prepare their children for lifelong learning. Resource centers in Walla Walla and Pasco, a bilingual Web site, resource kiosks in community gathering places, and a home visit study will all give parents and families the tools they need to help their children succeed. These resources are available to all families in our area- not only those that qualify as low income.



For more information about this program, visit [www.chswpirc.org](http://www.chswpirc.org). If you would like to help the Washington PIRC program in our area by donating educational, facility or technology resources, please contact (509) 544-5769.



## BE A PAGE IN OUR STATE'S CAPITOL!

Every year, Pages from across the state are part of the Page program for students. This is a unique opportunity for children aged 14-16 to learn about and be a part of the legislative process. Pages are paid a small stipend to work in Olympia for one week. Eastern Washington is underrepresented in this program, so apply today! I would be honored to sponsor your son or daughter as a Page for the House of Representatives in Olympia.

For more information and to apply, contact:

**House of Representatives**  
**(360) 786-7573**  
**[www.leg.wa.gov/House/](http://www.leg.wa.gov/House/)**  
**PageInternProgram**



*Dana Wardwell from Walla Walla  
paged for me in March this year.*



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## AUTISM TASK FORCE

Autism is a growing concern among families around the country. This disorder is widely misunderstood and appears in many forms. The Autism

Task Force, of which I am a member, was created by a law passed in 2005 to address the increasing incidence of autism in our state. Since its creation, our task force has met each month and worked to ensure that appropriate services and community support are offered to people with autism spectrum disorder. We will be sending our report to the legislature very soon.

Early screening and diagnosis, which can be done as early as twelve months of age, is the most important thing we can offer our families. Parents statewide, regardless of economic status, need access to these services for early detection. Support and tools should be available for parents to raise children with autism. We must continue working to make sure that parents receive the information and services they need to be successful parents.

## WALLA WALLA WATER RESOURCE PROGRAM

The use of water and resources in our region has been a longstanding issue, involving environmental groups, farmers, tribes and land developers. Effective Sept. 5 of this year, the Walla Walla Water Resource Program has been amended. This may affect your personal and business use of water in our area ***if you do not have existing water rights***. Here is what you need to know:



1. **All surface waters are now closed to new consumptive uses on a seasonal basis. Consumptive use is the use of water that reduces the water in the source.** Existing closures will also be extended.
2. Shallow aquifers connected to surface waters will be closed year-round.
3. There are new limits on "permit-exempt" ground water used for stock watering.



To find out more about this rule change, visit the Department of Ecology Web site at: [www.ecy.wa.gov](http://www.ecy.wa.gov) and search for "Walla Walla Water Resource Program."

## STRONG WHEAT PRICES GOOD NEWS FOR EASTERN WASHINGTON FAMILIES



I am happy, along with many wheat farmers, to read that wheat prices have skyrocketed. Many farmers have commented that after previous years of low prices, this year will offer them much needed debt relief.

Wheat is the fifth most profitable crop produced in Washington, and is an important contributor to the agriculture industry around the world. About 85 to 90 percent of the wheat produced in Washington is exported to countries around the world (Washington Wheat Commission). It makes me proud to represent farming families that feed people around the world every day.

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MAUREEN WALSH

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### RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET

If you need information about state government, you may find the following Internet sites to be great resources.

Or, you can always call or e-mail my office.

**houstorepublicans.wa.gov/walsh** – offers my biography and views on various issues.

**access.wa.gov** – provides access to state agency services, including applying for unemployment benefits, renewing car tabs, and much more.

**leg.wa.gov** – offers committee meeting schedules and nearly everything else you'd want to know about the Legislature.

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